



For Immediate Release
 June 29, 2008
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Partnering workshops in the North lead to good outcomes

By LuAnne Fantasia
 Gulf Region North District



Lessons-learned from the first partnering workshop for the Chamchamal Correctional Facility last November were applied to the Ibn Sena Hospital Renovation in Mosul two months later. Reconstruction projects that are good candidates for partnering workshops are typically those over \$5 million; and those considered to be more complex from an engineering perspective. (Photo courtesy Chroo Group)

CHAMCHAMAL, Iraq—"A successful partnering workshop is measured by the level of engagement by those attending — their dialogue, their situational awareness and shared problem-solving," said Colonel Michael Pfenning, commander of the Gulf Region North district.

Good reconstruction project candidates for partnering workshops are typically those with a budget of more than \$5 million and those considered to be more complex from an engineering perspective. Since November, Pfenning has hosted a number of partnering workshops.

"Partnering creates the opportunity for government representatives and the contractors to explain their scope of work, initial construction timelines, address initial concerns, and to discuss these plans with the customers and local stakeholders," said Pfenning. "We approach a partnering workshop from the perspective of starting a relationship, introducing the provincial leaders, contractors and other stakeholders to the concept of working together as members of a project delivery team."

Trust is the root of successful partnering with the Iraqi leadership and contrac-

tors, said Gary Lowe, the project manager in the Sulaymaniyah Resident Office. "When you gain these people's trust, you're the only person who can make that go away," said Lowe.

Key goals of successful partnering include maintaining a professional atmosphere of mutual respect and empowering each other to resolve problems and make decisions at the lowest possible level within the team.

"It's open communication and trust," said Lowe. "In partnering, everyone respects the common goals and needs and recognizes the advantage of teamwork and cooperation. And everyone is invited to sign a 'Partnering Agreement,' which isn't legally binding but represents their personal commitment to a successful project. It's a handshake."

During one such partnering workshop, General Aziz, director of Peshmerga Intelligence in the Sulaymaniyah Province, requested a name change for the Chamchamal Correctional Facility project.

"Many people still associate the former regime with this facility ... and the torture the Kurdish people suffered here," said Aziz. "But this refurbished facility will employ corrections officers who will [retrain] our people. This new institution improves our country's quality of life, and for that reason, I ask that we change the name from Chamchamal Prison to Chamchamal Correctional Facility."

After the general's request, the name was changed at the same meeting, said Lowe. The quality of relationships involved with the Chamchamal project sets the standard, and is the watermark, said Pfenning.

"The fact that those attending were willing to openly raise issues and concerns provides a lot of credibility to the project delivery team's efforts," said Pfenning. "My measurement of a workshop's overall success is how much the attendees actively participate in raising and resolving issues ... and by that measurement, the Chamchamal event was extremely successful."

Lessons learned from the Chamchamal workshop were applied to the Ibn Sena Hospital Renovation in Mosul two months later, said Pfenning.

The Ibn Sena Cardiac wing addition was considered complex due to its non-permissive location and the requirement for the main hospital to continue its ongoing operations, while the cardiac-care wing was renovated.

"We relied heavily on the Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team while planning the Ibn Sena workshop because they knew the provincial leadership who should attend, who could make customer-needs decisions on the spot; and how to contact them," said Pfenning.

In support of the country of Iraq's plan for improving its Rule of Law facilities, GRD has constructed or renovated 12 correctional facilities; completed 155 border posts and 14 point-of-entry facilities, and 38 courthouse projects with five more ongoing.

Note: LuAnne Fantasia is the public affairs officer for the Gulf Region North district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact her at (540) 542-1437 or e-mail requests to luanne.fantasia@usace.army.mil. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.